LANDS AND FORESTS
TECHNICAL NOTE

CHIGNECTO BOWHUNT 1986

Art Patton

The total number of bowhunters hunting at Chignecto Sanctuary rose again this year to 330 participants, more than a tenfold increase since the hunt was initiated in 1969.

As indicated in Table 1, 32 hunters took deer and six of these took two deer. There were 18 males and 14 females taken. The kill consisted of seven fawns, eight yearlings, six 2½ year-olds, six 3½'s, six 4½'s, one 5½, one 6½, and three 7½'s. The biggest buck weighed 95.25 kg (210 pounds) and the biggest doe 59.42 kg (131 pounds).

Table 2 indicates hunting effort and deer sightings by weekly periods and indicates that the week for best return on the hunter's time was Week Three. In that week hunters reported sighting .72 antlered deer per hunter day, 1.73 unantlered and with the unknown, a total of 3.19 total deer per hunter day, the highest number of sightings in these three categories. In Week Five, the most deer in the unknown category (presence or absence of antlers could not be determined) was reported. Overall, hunters reported an average of 2.21 deer sightings per hunter day.

Table 3 compares sightings of various species each year since the hunt began. This year's number of deer sightings per hunter day was close to that of the 18-year mean of 2.28. Moose sightings on the area remain relatively low compared to those of the mid-1970's. If hunters are reporting as accurately as in the past, ruffed grouse sightings hit an all-time low this year. Comparable sightings of 0.3 per hunter day were reported in 1980, supporting the approximately seven-year cycle reported for this species. Snowshoe hare are also reported to follow approximately a seven-year cycle, and sightings this year may be the start of a downward trend. Bobcat sightings are rare but have been fairly steady for the past few years. The coyote, as a newcomer, has probably caused the most discussion, rumor, concern and speculation of any animal in the province. Any decrease in deer or any game sightings or kills in any area are likely to be blamed on increasing coyote populations. Coyote sightings on Chignecto were first reported by bowhunters in 1982. Large increases in sightings in 1983 and 1984 were reported.

In 1985 and 1986, however, coyote sightings have dropped significantly from the 1984 high. This suggests that suitable habitat in the Sanctuary area could not support an unlimited number of coyotes. Quite likely the same fact will become apparent throughout the province.

Table 4 compares the kill and hunting pressure for each week of the season and also indicates Week Three as giving the best return per hunter day – despite a significantly higher total kill in Week Two.

Table 5 compares hunting effort and kill for each year since 1969. This Table and Table 3 give some indication of the steadily growing interest in bowhunting in the province.

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Table 1. *Deer kill sex, age, weight and antler development.*

Kill 1 Date	Kill 2 Date	1 Sex	2 Sex	1 Age	2 Age	1 Wt.kg	2 Wt.kg	1 Beam (mm)	2 Beam (mm)	1 Pts.	2 Pts.
10/31/86		F		7.0		47.63					
10/31/86		M		4.5		90.72		32.0		8	
11/01/86		F		2.5		59.42					
11/01/86		M		0.5		27.22					
11/01/86		F		0.5		24.95					
11/04/86		F		6.5		47.63					
11/05/86		M		4.5		95.25		31.0		8	
11/06/86		F		4.5		49.90					
11/06/86		M		1.5		48.53		14.5		2	
11/07/86	11/29/86	F	M	1.5	5.5	34.02	54.88		28.3		8
11/08/86		F		1.5		46.27					
11/08/86		F		1.5		47.17					
11/10/86	11/13/86	M	M	2.5	2.5	58.97	66.68	20.3	29.3		8
11/10/86	11/10/86	M	F	0.5	7.5	34.02	56.70				
11/11/86		M		3.5		52.16		18.0		4	
11/11/86		M		3.5		63.50		32.3		8	
11/11/86		M		2.5		61.23		22.0		5	
11/12/86	12/03/86	F	F	1.5	0.5	47.17					
11/12/86		F		3.5		48.08					
11/13/86	11/21/86	M	M	4.5	0.5	65.77	34.47	31.5		8	
11/13/86	11/22/86	M	F	3.5	3.5	54.43	49.90	19.5		4	
11/14/86		M		2.5		56.70		21.1		6	
11/14/86		F		2.5		40.82					
11/15/86		F		1.5		38.56					
11/15/86		M		1.5		45.36		15.5		1	
11/15/86		F		4.5		49.90					
11/19/86		F		7.5		48.99					
11/20/86		F		3.5		52.16					
11/22/86		M		0.5		31.75					
11/22/86		M		4.5		92.08		38.0		9	
11/28/86		F		0.5		23.59					
12/05/86		F		1.5		46.27					

Table 2. *Deer sightings by week of the season.*

Resident	Status	Hunters	Days	Buck Sight.	Doe Sight.	Unk. Sight.	Total Sight.
Resident	OFS*	85	142	88	212	64	364
Non-Res.	OFS	18	36	25	89	11	125
Total	OFS	103	178	113	301	75	489
Sightings/Day	OFS			0.63	1.69	0.42	2.75
Resident	Wk1	149	488	174	441	199	814
Non-Res.	Wk1	28	103	65	136	40	241
Total	Wk1	177	591	239	577	239	1,055
Sightings/Day	Wk1			0.40	0.98	0.40	1.79
Resident	Wk2	155	500	299	594	217	1,110
Non-Res.	Wk2	11	28	8	32	13	53
Total	Wk2	166	528	307	626	230	1,163
Sightings/Day	Wk2			0.58	1.19	0.44	2.20
Resident	Wk3	74	189	128	313	126	567
Non-Res.	Wk3	2	4	11	21	17	49
Total	Wk3	76	193	139	334	143	616
Sightings/Day	Wk3			0.72	1.73	0.74	3.19
Resident	Wk4	85	151	54	117	101	272
Non-Res.	Wk4	7	12	3	7	7	17
Total	Wk4	92	163	57	124	108	289
Sightings/Day	Wk4			0.35	0.76	0.66	1.77
Resident	Wk5	41	104	33	144	88	265
Non-Res.	Wk5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Wk5	41	104	33	144	88	265
Sightings/Day	Wk5			0.32	1.38	0.85	2.55
Resident	Season		1,574	776	1,821	795	3,392
Non-Res.	Season		183	112	285	88	485
Total	Season	330	1,757	888	2,106	883	3,877
Sightings/Day	Season			0.51	1.20	0.50	2.21

* *OFS – Opening Friday & Saturday*

Table 3. Wildlife sightings and sightings/hunter day reported 1969 - 1986.

Year	Deer Total	Deer/ H.D.	Moose Total	Moose/ H.D.	Ruffed Grouse Total	Ruffed Grouse/ H.D.	Hare Total	Hare/ H.D.	Bobcat Total	Bobcat/ H.D.	Coyote Total	Coyote/ H.D.
1969	171	2.2	24	0.31							0	–
1970	263	1.8	13	0.09							0	–
1971	338	1.2	34	0.12							0	–
1972	423	2.0	11	0.05			Not Recorded				0	–
1973	517	2.1	5	0.02							0	–
1974	598	2.0	42	0.14							0	–
1975	562	1.7	64	0.19	431	1.3	126	0.4	0	0.0	0	–
1976	885	2.8	63	0.20	938	3.0	267	0.9	7	0.02	0	–
1977	1125	2.3	51	0.10	1060	2.0	924	1.8	10	0.02	0	–
1978	1182	2.2	23	0.04	433	0.8	600	1.1	8	0.015	0	–
1979	2023	2.7	71	0.10	461	0.6	144	0.2	6	0.008	0	–
1980	1586	2.3	34	0.05	229	0.3	44	0.1	3	0.004	0	–
1981	1992	2.3	64	0.07	795	0.9	157	0.2	9	0.01	0	–
1982	1519	1.6	45	0.05	1253	1.3	267	0.3	3	0.003	2	0.002
1983	3345	3.6	67	0.07	1404	1.5	362	0.4	6	0.006	17	0.018
1984	3590	2.8	116	0.12	1899	1.5	849	0.7	11	0.008	33	0.026
1985	5933	3.4	44	0.03	1837	1.1	1134	0.7	13	0.007	11	0.006
1986	3877	2.2	67	0.04	429	0.2	741	0.4	10	0.006	13	0.007

Table 4. *Deer kill by week.*

Resident	Status	Days	Kill 1 Male	Kill 1 Female	Kill 2 Male	Kill 2 Female	Total Kill
Residents	OFS*	142	0	2	0	0	2
Non-Res.	OFS	36	2	1	0	0	3
Total	OFS	178	2	3	0	0	5
Days/Kill	OFS						36
Resident	Wk1	488	2	4	0	0	6
Non-Res.	Wk1	103	0	1	0	0	1
Total	Wk1	591	2	5	0	0	7
Days/Kill	Wk1						84
Resident	Wk2	500	9	4	1	1	15
Non-Res.	Wk2	28	0	1	0	0	1
Total	Wk2	528	9	5	1	1	16
Days/Kill	Wk2						33
Resident	Wk3	189	2	2	1	1	6
Non-Res.	Wk3	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Wk3	193	2	2	1	1	6
Days/Kill	Wk3						32
Resident	Wk4	151	0	1	1	0	2
Non-Res.	Wk4	12	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Wk4	163	0	1	1	0	2
Days/Kill	Wk4						82
Resident	Wk5	104	0	1	0	1	2
Non-Res.	Wk5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Wk5	104	0	1	0	1	2
Days/Kill	Wk5						52

* *OFS – Opening Friday & Saturday*

Table 5. Bowhunt participation and deer harvest 1969 - 1986.

Year	Legal Days	No. of Bowhunters	Hunter Days	Deer Kill	Days/ Bowhunter	Hunter Days/ Kill	Kill/ Hunter %
1969	10	31	78	4	2.5	19.5	12.9
1970	10	46	147	4	3.2	36.8	8.7
1971	13	60	277	4	4.6	69.3	6.7
1972	13	44	215	1	4.9	215.0	2.3
1973	13	47	252	4	5.4	63.0	8.5
1974	13	68	305	6	4.5	50.8	8.8
1975	13	69	336	3	4.9	112.0	4.3
1976	13	61	314	5	5.1	62.8	8.2
1977	26	86	500	5	5.8	100.0	5.8
1978	26	96	548	9	5.7	60.9	9.4
1979	41	108	736	10	6.8	73.6	9.3
1980	25	125	677	26	5.4	26.0	20.8
1981	25	156	858	11	5.5	78.0	7.1
1982	26	172	985	16	5.7	61.6	9.3
1983	32	173	935	26	5.4	36.0	15.0
1984	32	225	1276	39	5.7	32.7	17.3
1985	39	302	1729	49	5.7	35.3	16.2
1986	32	330	1757	38	5.3	46.2	11.5
Total	402	2199	11925	260			
Means	22.3	122.2	662.5	14.4	5.4	45.9	11.8